



## NEWS RELEASE

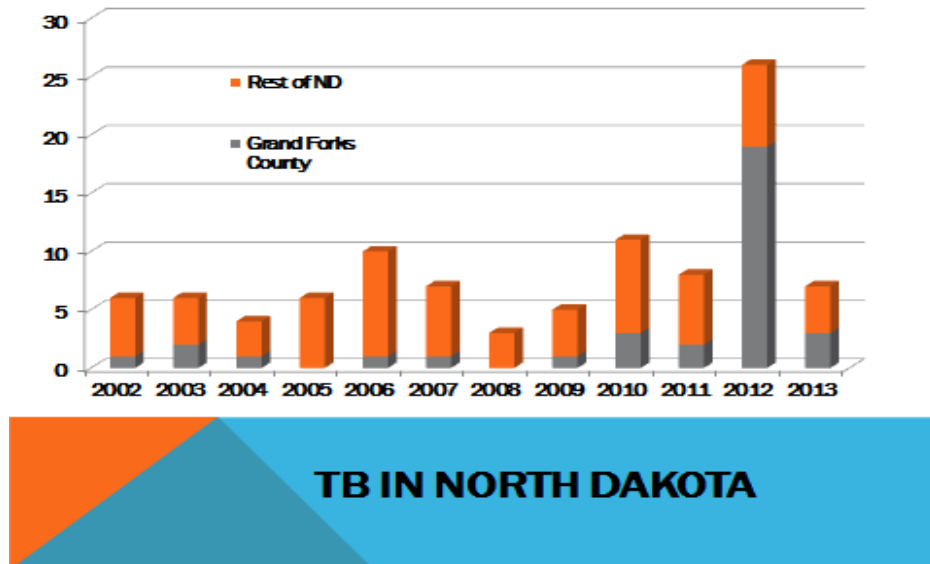
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### Health Officials Provide Update on TB Cases in Eastern North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – Health officials are reporting that a total of 26 cases of active tuberculosis (TB) have now been linked to an outbreak that originated in the Grand Forks area. The total includes two cases in 2010, 20 cases in 2012, and 4 cases so far in 2013. Twenty-three of those cases have been in Grand Forks County and three other cases have been located in other counties, but have been linked back to the Grand Forks outbreak. The three additional cases were identified in Cass and Stutsman Counties. The following graph shows the significant increase in TB cases as a result of this outbreak.



When TB cases such as this are occurring in a community, it takes a significant amount of time to conduct the investigations around each case and complete the testing and treatment needed. Health officials continue to do contact investigations to identify people who may have been exposed to the active cases that may be infectious. Those who are considered at risk will be

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notified and given guidance about testing procedures. A total of 1,301 TB skin tests have been conducted so far as part of this outbreak. In addition to the active cases, 69 latent TB infections have been identified. People with latent TB have the bacteria in their bodies, but they are not sick and cannot spread the TB bacteria to others. These people are not contagious. It's important to identify people with latent TB so they can be treated before the disease progresses to active TB.

Public health officials also continue to spend a significant amount of time working with those diagnosed with active TB to ensure that they are receiving the care they need and are properly taking their medication. It is very important for those with TB to take the prescribed medication as directed.

The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. The symptoms of TB of the lungs include productive, prolonged cough (duration of three weeks or longer), chest pain, and coughing up blood. It should be noted that symptoms usually develop gradually and last for a prolonged period of time. This is different than symptoms of the flu, which usually come on very suddenly and go away after a couple of days to a week. Anyone experiencing symptoms of TB should contact his or her health-care provider as soon as possible for an evaluation.

The most important way to stop the spread of tuberculosis is to cover the mouth and nose when coughing, and for those with TB to take the prescribed medication as directed. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

For more information, contact Dee Pritschet, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2377 or Grand Forks Public Health, at 701.787.8100. Information about TB and this outbreak can be found by visiting [www.grandforksgov.com/publichealth](http://www.grandforksgov.com/publichealth).

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